DEFIANT

4

$3.25

$4.50 CANADA

SPECIAL 48-PAGE ISSUE!

W.A.R. DANCER™

THE DANCER DREAMS

NEW YORK CITY, OUTSIDE MADISON SQUARE GARDEN...

LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE ALREADY STARTED DESTROYING THE WORLD, HAVEN'T YOU, MISTER DANCER?

THE DANCE OF DESTRUCTION HAS YET TO BEGIN, CHARLESMITH.

IN THIS HUMBLE ARENA I HAVE UNDONE HIM WHO WAS THE SECOND GREATEST THREAT TO MY MISSION.

YOU, CHARLESMITH, ARE THE GREATEST THREAT.

I'M SO FLATTERED. LET'S GET TO IT, THEN. ARE YOU *READY*, MISTER DANCER?

I AM *WEARY* FROM THE BATTLE JUST *ENDED*... BUT...

STORY BY *ALAN WEISS* AND *JIM SHOOTER*
WRITTEN BY *ALAN WEISS* WITH *JIM SHOOTER*
DRAWN BY *DAVE TAYLOR*
INKED BY *KEITH WILSON*
PAINTED BY *TIM PERKINS*, *BRIAN MOYER*, *DAVID HILLMAN*
LETTERED BY *GEORGE ROBERTS*
EDITED BY *JOSEPH A. JAMES*.

...A WARRIOR MUST BE EVER READY TO ACCEPT THE WILL OF *FATE*.

FATE HAS BROUGHT YOU HERE NOW.

YES, CHARLESMITH. I AM READY!

OKAY. HOW DID YOU SAY IT...? RITUAL COMBAT TILL DEATH DO US PART OR SOMETHING?

WHATEVER, ROUND TWO... AT THE BELL, COME OUT FIGHTING...

...*DING!* COME AND GET IT, MISTER DANCER!

EVEN SO! BUT EVEN AS YOU HAVE CHOSEN THE TIME...

I SHALL CHOOSE THE PLACE!

HEY! ARE YOU RUNNING OUT ON ME?

FOLLOW ME, YOUNG WARRIOR!

FOLLOW ME...

IF YOU CAN...

...AWAY FROM THE CROWD...

...TOWARDS THE WATER...

WAR DANCER™#4. May 1994. Published by DEFIANT®, a division of Enlightened Entertainment Partners, L.P., 232 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016. Jim Shooter, President; Winston Fowlkes, Publisher. Published monthly. Copyright © 1994 EEP, L.P. All rights reserved. Price $3.25 per copy in the U.S. and $4.50 in Canada. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any person living or dead or any institution is intended, and any such similarity that may exist is purely coincidental. The trademarks DEFIANT, ENLIGHTENED ENTERTAINMENT, and WAR DANCER and all of the character names and likenesses featured herein are the exclusive property of EEP, L.P. PRINTED IN CANADA.

WOW! DIDJA SEE THAT GUY?!

WHAT GUY?

INNA BLACK PANTS AND NO SHIRT--HE MUSTA JUMPED FIFTY FEET!

SO? THAT ISN'T IMPORTANT!

RIGHT--THE GARDEN'S TRASHED! THE CWA WRESTLING MATCHES ARE DOWNA TUBES!

YEAH, HE'S GOT SOME IMPRESSIVE MOVES, ALL RIGHT...

BUT HE DOESN'T LOOK AS TOUGH AS HE DID LAST TIME.

OR MAYBE IT'S JUST THAT I'VE GOTTEN TOUGHER. YEAH.

I CAN BEAT 'IM!

ROGER WATERS

TOR

I'M COMING, MISTER DANCER!

I'LL FOLLOW YOU--TO THE END OF THE WORLD! YOU CAN'T DANCE YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS!

WEAK OR NOT, HE'S STILL SMOOTH--STILL GRACEFUL. WELL, WHAT I LACK IN GRACE I MAKE UP IN POWER...

MUSCLE POWER... AND WILL POWER!

24 hr PARKING

BILLY BALLISTIC! AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU ALL IN ONE PIECE! YOU ALL RIGHT, DARLIN'?

I'M GREAT, VENUS! NEVER BETTER! EVERY-BODY GET OUT OKAY?

A COUPLE OF FOLKS BOUGHT IT IN THE BLAST, BUT MAYHEW AND OVERSIZE AND OUR GALS MADE IT OUT FINE.

BANG

HOW'S MY PARTNER?

THWACK GOT STABBED PRETTY GOOD. DOC SAYS IT'S CRITICAL. YOU GET THAT GUY THAT DID IT AND HIS PAL?

THAT SPEAR-HEADED FREAK GOT AWAY... FOR NOW! BUT THE DANCING STRANGER TOOK CARE OF MASSAKER!

IT WAS THE GREATEST FIGHT I EVER SAW! MASS *BLEW UP*... REAL GOOD!

NOW WHICH WAY DID THE DANCER GO?

HE HEADED EAST, WITH THAT BIG BLOND GUY CHASIN' 'IM.

REV UP THE *BALLISTICAR*, MERCEDES! WE'RE GOIN' *AFTER* HIM!

TRAFFIC'S PRETTY BAD, BUT I'LL GET YOU THERE, BOSS.

BANG

I GOT A *FEELING* ABOUT THAT DANCER GUY! HE'S... SO...POWERFUL! SPECIAL... IN A *LOT* OF WAYS! BIG THINGS ARE BOUND TO HAPPEN AROUND HIM...

...AND *I'M* GONNA BE THERE WHEN THEY DO!

WE'LL SEE TO THWACK. YOU'D BETTER WATCH YOUR BUTT, BILLY B! YOU HEAR ME?

WHY, MS. VEGAS...! MA'AM, ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT ME?

JUST CONCERNED FER MY PERCENTAGE, LIKE ANY GOOD MANAGER OUGHTA BE!

I HEAR YA, LADY! MEET YOU BACK AT MY PLACE! C'MON, MERCE, LET'S HIT IT!

MEANWHILE, IN AN APARTMENT ON MANHATTAN'S EAST SIDE...

SARAH! SARAH THORNTON! DO YOU **HEAR** ME?

CALL HER **SALLY**-- SHE'S DECIDED NOT TO GO BACK TO HER OLD STAGE NAME.

SHHHH! PLEASE COULD EVERYBODY BE A LITTLE QUIETER?

I NEED TO HEAR THE TV! THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT THAT BLAST AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN!

THERE HASN'T BEEN ANY **QUIET** SINCE YOU CAME TO STAY WITH ME, SALLY.

SINCE YOUR CAREER CAUGHT FIRE AGAIN IT'S BEEN A-NON-STOP MEDIA CIRCUS!

I KNOW, ENZIE, AND I'M SORRY! I'LL BE GETTING MY OWN PLACE, AND...

AAAAAY, SAL-- GUEST VJ? MTV?

NO, REALLY... LETTERMAN WANTS HER ON, TOO.

WE'LL HAVE TO DO SOME-THING WITH HER HAIR!

SEVEN FIGURES? TRY EIGHT OR... **NOW** YOU'RE TALKING.

YO! MS. THROCKMORTON! WE GOT **BUSINESS** HERE!

PUT IT ON HOLD FOR NOW, SID. I'M TAKING A BATH!

BUT...I HAVE THESE CONTRACTS...

LADIES

JUST HANDLE IT, BETH.

FOR OVER A YEAR MY PHONE DOESN'T RING. THEN... THE **DANCER** CAME INTO MY LIFE. EVERYTHING CHANGED!

I THINK HIS POWER IS STRONG ENOUGH TO CHANGE **EVERYBODY'S** LIFE.

CAN'T THINK ABOUT THAT NOW. BRAIN HURTS. WHERE'S MY BUBBLE BATH!

AAAAAY! DON'T TAKE ALL DAY IN DERE SAL! HARD COPY'S ON THE LINE! YA **HEAR** ME? PRICE A '**FAME** MISS THROCKMORTON! YOU GOT **RESPONSIBILITIES** NOW, BABE!

AS SALLY EASES INTO HER BATH, A YOUNG WOMAN ENTERS THE APARTMENT.

NO ONE **SEES** HER, FOR, SUDDENLY, ALL PRESENT FEEL THE URGE TO CAST THEIR GAZE **ANYWHERE** BUT HER DIRECTION.

NO ONE SUSPECTS THAT SOME-ONE ELSE'S WILL HAS BEEN IMPOSED UPON HIS OR HER OWN...

...THAT SOMEONE ELSE HAS GENTLY PUSHED HER WAY INTO HIS OR HER MIND...

...AND GIVEN THEM A LITTLE NUDGE.

HEY! WHO ARE YOU?

NEVER MIND.

I KNOW YOU'VE ENCOUNTERED THE DANCER, SALLY. I WANT TO KNOW ALL ABOUT HIM.

TALK ABOUT HIM, SALLY. THAT'LL BRING THE IMAGES IN YOUR MIND INTO FOCUS SO I CAN SEE THEM BETTER.

HE... CAME OUT OF NOWHERE... SAID HE WAS LOOKING FOR HIS LOST LOST LOVER, **ZAHNRHEE.**

WHO KNOWS WHAT LED HIM TO MY DOOR-STEP. MAYBE ZAHNRHEE AND I USE THE SAME PERFUME.

BUT, GOD, I WISH I WERE HER. I ALWAYS DREAMED THAT MY PRINCE WOULD COME, AND BOY...

...THAT AZTEC-MAYAN LOOKING GOD-MAN IS A PRINCE, ALL RIGHT. A PRINCE OF DREAMS...

NIGHTMARES, TOO. WHERE IS HE NOW, SALLY?

I PRAY HE WASN'T HURT IN THAT EXPLOSION AT THE GARDEN. I I HAVE A FEELING HE WAS THERE. THINGS HAVE A WAY OF BLOWING UP AROUND THAT GUY.

THANK YOU, SALLY. ALL YOU'LL REMEMBER OF THIS IS THAT A FRIEND STOPPED BY.

GOOD-BYE.

MINUTES LATER...

FINALLY, SAL! WE THOUGHT YOU DROWNED!

NO, I WAS... CHATTING WITH A FRIEND... WHATZERNAME... UM... OH, WELL.

LADIES

DIDN'T YOU SEE HER, ENZIE? SHE JUST LEFT.

DIDN'T SEE NOBODY, GIRL!

AT THE UNITED NATIONS PLAZA...

DONE RUNNING YET?

I CHOOSE *THIS* AS OUR BATTLE-FIELD.

THE *U.N.*? FUNNY! YOU'RE SO FUNNY I FORGOT TO LAUGH.

THIS PLACE WAS BUILT FOR *PEACE*, NOT FIGHTING.

I FEEL IT'S AURA, CHARLESMITH, STEEPED IN DREAMS.

THIS EDIFICE REPRESENTS WHAT WAS ONCE REGARDED AS YOUR WORLD'S LAST BEST HOPE.

BUT NOW, YOUNG WARRIOR...

...*WE* ARE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN *WE*?

YOU TOLD ME YOU WERE *DEATH ITSELF.*

AS FIRE DESTROYS THE FOREST... TO MAKE WAY FOR NEW LIFE...

...SO I WILL DESTROY ALL THINGS IF I MUST.

YOU GROW EVER STRONGER AND WISER IN THE WAYS OF WAR...

...OR, PERHAPS, I HAVE REMAINED ON THIS MATERIAL PLANE TOO LONG...

...WITH THE POWER OF MY SPIRIT *MIRED* IN SLUGGISH FLESH.

AS YOUR SPIRIT RISES TO EMBRACE ITS DESTINY, YOU MAY YET *SURPASS* ME, BROTHER...

...AND THEN MY BURDEN WILL BECOME *YOURS*... AND *YOU* WILL BE DOOMED TO BE THE DEATH OF ALL THAT LIVES.

DON'T CALL ME *BROTHER!*

DON'T YOU *DARE*...! MY BROTHER WAS THE *BEST!* A *HERO*... A *GOOD* MAN...!

NOT MURDERING *SCUM* LIKE YOU!

WE *ARE* BROTHERS IN SPIRIT. WE ARE CLOSER THAN YOU *DREAM!*

IN TIME, YOU WILL ACHIEVE ENLIGHTMENT, AND TOGETHER WE WILL DECIDE THE DESTINY OF LIFE.

BUT THIS IS NOT OUR MOMENT. I AM *WEARY*..

...BUT I AM YET YOUR *MASTER.*

YOU SON OF A B...

HMH. YOUR LAST ASSERTION WAS WRONG, CHARLESMITH. I AM UNDENIABLY OF NOBLE BIRTH.

(ONLY A CHILD WARRIOR WOULD VENTURE TO INSULT AN ADVERSARY'S LINEAGE.)

HUH. NICE SHOT.

THIS BARGE IS ALREADY TOO FAR DOWNRIVER FOR ME TO JUMP BACK.

BUT I'LL FIND YOU AGAIN... AND YOU'LL BE DANCING TO MY TUNE.

THAT'S RIGHT. DON'T LET 'EM SAY NOTHING ABOUT YOUR MOM!

I FOLLOWED YOU JUST IN CASE YOU NEEDED SOME HELP. GUESS NOT.

YOU GOING AFTER HIM?

NO. I AM... WEARY.

SURE YOU ARE, AFTER CLOBBERING *MISTER MASSAKER*, AND NOW *THIS* GUY.

BANG

BET YOU'RE HUNGRY, TOO. I ALWAYS AM AFTER A FIGHT. WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU ATE?

TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AGO... AT MY WEDDING BANQUET.

OH. WELL....

TELL YOU WHAT. BEFORE THE COPS SHOW AND COMPLICATE OUR LIVES, LET'S HEAD FOR MY PLACE.

THE BULLET BABES CAN WHIP US UP A SNACK, AND YOU CAN TAKE A SNOOZE IF YOU LIKE.

YES. I MUST REST.

MEANWHILE, BACK AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN...

THE DANCER CERTAINLY WAS HERE.

TWO BEINGS OF GREAT POWER FOUGHT HERE...

THEN, A *THIRD*... OF EVEN *GREATER* POWER ARRIVED. THE DANCER?

NO. HE WAS ALREADY HERE. SOMEONE ELSE.

GOD, THE RESIDUAL PSYCHIC ENERGY IS... *THICK*. LIKE, YOU CAN ALMOST *TOUCH* IT.

NONE OF THESE PEOPLE ACTUALLY SAW WHAT HAPPENED...

WAIT. *THOSE* TWO.

HEY, YOU OKAY, MONTY?

YEAH, YEAH, YEAH. ALL THE EXCITEMENT JUST *GOT* TO ME. I GOT A LITTLE DIZZY, THAT'S ALL.

I'M USED TO CWA WRESTLING, NOT *REAL* ACTION. WHAT HAPPENED, OVERSIZE?

THAT INJUN GUY LEFT. SOME BLOND GUY WENT AFTER HIM. THEN BILLY B. WENT CHASING THEM BOTH.

I THINK BILLY'S BUDDIES WITH THE INJUN.

BILLY B. *BILLY BALLISTIC*.

I'M CLOSING IN ON YOU, DANCER.

SOON, IN BILLY BALLISTIC'S EAST SIDE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT...

WELL, THIS IS IT! THE OLD HOMESTEAD!

I KNOW IT'S BEYOND TACKY... ALL THE WAY TO SUPER-KITSCH.

A SHRINK MIGHT SAY THERE WAS WAY TOO MUCH PHALLIC SYMBOLISM FOR A HEALTHY, GROWING BOY... THE BULLETS, MISSILES AND ALL.

BUT I SEE 'EM AS...YOU KNOW... ROCKETS, ROCKETSHIPS! SINGLE-POINTED PROJECTILES INTO THE FUTURE!

YES... IN KEEPING WITH THE POSITIVE, MALE, SOLAR PROJECTION OF YOUR LIFE'S PATH.

PENETRATING THE VAST, UNPREDICTABLE WOMB OF ALL CREATION!

I KNEW YOU'D UNDERSTAND! WHAT DO THOSE SHRINKS KNOW, ANYWAY!

NOTHING MUCH, BOSS. THEY JUST TELL YOU WHAT THEY THINK YOU WANT TO HEAR.

YO, BILLY! YOUR FRIEND GONNA HANG WITH US AWHILE?

I THINK I PULLED A LEG MUSCLE AT THE GARDEN-- MAYBE HE CAN MASSAGE IT FOR ME!

HERE YOU GO, GUY! YOU CAN CRASH IN ONE OF THE SPARE BEDROOMS!

SLEEP AS LONG AS YOU WANT.

SLEEP?

OH, YES... SLEEP! LOW-LEVEL ENERGY RENEWAL.

I HAVE NOT SLEPT FOR...

TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND YEARS, RIGHT? SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE THAT, TOO!

WELL, I'LL MAKE SURE NOBODY BOTHERS YA.

YOU, ARE... UNUSUAL, WARRIOR. YOUR MANNER IS THAT OF A YOUTHFUL KNIGHT ERRANT...

...BUT YOU HAVE THE MANNERS OF A NOBLE LORD.

THANKS. HEY, YOU CAN CALL ME BILLY, OKAY?

SLEEP TIGHT...

"... AND *IN* THAT SLEEP, WHAT *DREAMS* MAY COME!"

"BETCHA DIDN'T EXPECT SHAKESPEARE FROM A WRESTLER, DIDJA?"

"I LOVE HAMLET!"

SIMULTANEOUSLY, IN AN ABSOLUTE ELSEWHERE... THE PLACE WHERE THE STUFF OF DREAMS IS...

WOW!

SOMETHING NEW HAS BEEN ADDED!

WHAT IS IT, RAVE?

CLEMENTINE, MY DARKLING! WHAT A JOLT! IT'S AS IF ALL THE ALARMS AND CUCKOO CLOCKS IN CREATION WENT OFF ALL AT ONCE--IN MY HEAD!!

SOMEONE VERY POWERFUL HAS JUST CHIMED IN ON THE ASTRAL PLANE!

BUT NOBODY WHO DREAMS GETS BY YOU, BOSS!

CAW-RECT!

BUT HOW CAN THIS BE? A FULL GROWN ADULT OF IMMENSE ENERGY, NEVER SHOWN UP BEFORE? NEVER SLEPT? A PUZZLEMENT INDEED!

IS HE A GOD? A HERO I SHOULD PROTECT? A COSMIC-SCALE SCOUNDREL I MUST THWART?

ONE THING IS CERTAIN, CLEM...

...THE ASTRAL BATTLE-FIELD HAS JUST GOTTEN MUCH MORE... INTERESTING FOR THE ONE WHO IS TRULY RAVEN MADD!!!

BACK ON PLANET EARTH, THE DANCER DREAMS, HIS SPIRIT EXCITED BY A TOUCH.

MY LORD?

A GENTLE, WARM, LOVING TOUCH.

ARHQ TSOLMEC! YOU HAVEN'T HEARD A WORD I'VE SAID!

ZAHNRHEE? CAN IT BE YOU?!

ZAHNRHEE, IT HAS BEEN SO LONG.

WHY, WE HAVE BEEN TOGETHER ALL AFTERNOON, MY LOVE. HAVE YOU BEEN DAYDREAMING?

THIS IS THE DAY OF OUR WEDDING, AND ALL QUEXZAL KWA REJOICES!

THIS IS A *DREAM.*

FEEL MY CARESS, NOBLE PRINCE. AM I A DREAM?

AH, ZAHNRHEE, YOU DO NOT KNOW THE TRUTH. HOW COULD YOU?

IN ANOTHER PLACE, THERE IS A RACE CALLED *HUMANKIND.*

THEY *DREAMED* AND IMAGINED THAT THERE WAS A PLACE WHERE DREAMS DWELT...

...AND SO THERE WAS.

WE WERE BORN IN THE PLACE OF DREAMS.

ARE WE NOT REAL?

ALL THEY IMAGINE IS REAL... AND SO, WE ARE.

EVERYTHING IS *ENERGY*, MY LOVE. THE ENERGY OF AN IMAGE FLICKERING UPON THE DARK POOLS OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS...

...IS NO LESS REAL THAN THE ENERGY FROZEN IN THE CRAGS OF A STONY PEAK.

THEN... WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF HUMANKIND?

YES.

SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS AGO, BY THEIR RECKONING, BUT FAR LONGER BY OURS... FOR TIME IN THE PLACE OF DREAMS IS SURREAL...

...THERE WAS AN AGE OF *BLACK DEATH* ON THE WORLD OF HUMAN-KIND.

A GREAT AND HIDEOUS DYING THREATENED TO STILL THEIR DREAMS FOREVER

I WAS FASHIONED OF THEIR WILL TO LIVE. I WAS MADE STRONG, AND SKILLED IN THE ARTS OF SCIENCE, MAGIC, LOVE, WAR AND LORE.

YOU WERE LOVE ITSELF, AND THE SPIRIT OF LIFE AND THE GIVING OF LIFE.

TOGETHER, ON OUR WEDDING NIGHT, WE BEGAN THE DANCE THAT WOULD *EMPOWER* LIFE-- END THE BLACK DEATH THAT THREATENED HUMANKIND...

AND THE DISPAIR THAT DARKENED THEIR DREAMS.

WE BEGAN THE *DANCE OF TWO.*

BUT HUMANKIND HOLDS FONDLY IN ITS HEART ITS *BASER* INSTINCTS...

...AND SO THERE WERE THOSE IN THE PLACE OF DREAMS FILLED WITH JEALOUSY, GREED AND FEAR.

THEY *COVETED* THE POWER OF OUR DANCE...

... AND SOUGHT TO TWIST IT TO THEIR OWN SELFISH ENDS.

THEY CONJURED THE VERY SPIRIT OF OUR WORLD, THE DREAD *FEATHERED SERPENT*, TO INTERRUPT OUR DANCE.

I COULD NOT SAVE YOU, ZAHNRHEE.

THE SERPENT *DEVOURED* YOU... AND SLITHERED BACK TO THE CENTER OF THE PLACE OF DREAMS.

AND I WAS CAST OUT INTO THE DARKNESS, TOSSED IN THE MAELSTROM OF ENERGY BORN BY THE UNION OF OUR SPIRITS.

...*UNSPENT* WHEN OUR SPELL WAS BROKEN.

AND QUEXZAL KWA?

THE MIGHTIEST CITY IN ALL THE PLACE OF DREAMS, FOR IT WAS FOUNDED ON HOPE...

...WAS CAUGHT UP IN THE MAELSTROM AS WELL...

...AND UTTERLY DESTROYED.

THUS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CREATION OF THE DREAMS OF HUMANKIND, AND THE ISLAND UPON WHICH IT STOOD, WAS SWALLOWED BURNING BY THE SEA.

I SAW...

...BUT I COULD DO NOTHING.

I WAS SWEPT AWAY INTO UNLIFE...

...LONELINESS...

...LOST IN THE VOID.

FOR A TIMELESS TIME, I DANCED TO THE RHYTHMS OF THE INFINITE, ONE WITH THE ENERGY.

THEN, ZAHNRHEE, I HEARD YOUR VOICE.

I FOLLOWED IT TO THE WORLD OF HUMANKIND, TO THE PLACE OF THE DREAMERS.

CLOTHING MY SPIRIT IN FLESH, I WALKED AMONG THEM.

BUT YOU WERE NOT THERE.

AT LAST I *SLEPT*...

...AND NOW... I *DREAM*.

THUS, I *RETURN* TO THE PLACE OF DREAMS, TO THE WORLD OF THE DREAMTIME WHERE I WAS BORN.

BUT... WHAT IN NEM'S HOLY NAME IS *THAT*?

WHAT HAS BECOME OF MY WORLD?

THE DREAMTIME WORLD I KNEW IS GONE... AND IN ITS PLACE... THIS?!

IT'S ALIVE...!

...A MONSTROUS CREATURE...

...A HIDEOUS LIVING WORLD!

NO! THIS IS A DREAM. ONLY A DREAM...

BUT WHAT IS A DREAM TO ONE WHO IS A PRINCE OF DREAMS?

IT IS BUT A PORTAL... A WAY TO ENTER THE PLACE OF DREAMS.

THE WORLD-THING RECOILS AT MY TOUCH.

NIGHTMARE WARRIORS...

...HEEDLESS... UNFEELING... RELENTLESS...

...WITHOUT CONSCIENCE.

I AM WEARY...

...BUT A WARRIOR MUST ACCEPT THE WILL OF *FATE*.

FATE HAS BROUGHT ME HERE NOW.

I WILL NOT BE DRIVEN AWAY.

THEY FAIL...

...AND SO THEY CRUMBLE AWAY...

...THEIR TATTERED FLESH CONSUMED AGAIN BY THE WORLD.

WHO ARE YOU?

I AM LORCA. LISTEN TO ME.

SINCE THE DESTRUCTION OF QUEXZAL KWA, LIFE HAS RUN AMOK, CONSUMING ALL UNLIVING MATTER IN OUR WORLD...

...THEN FEEDING UPON ITSELF IN AN ENDLESS CYCLE OF DEATH AND RENEWAL. THE ECOSYSTEM HAS BECOME SO CLOSELY INTERWOVEN...

...THAT, IN FACT, OUR WORLD IS ONE ORGANISM!

FOR MILLENNIA, THOSE WHO DWELL HERE HAVE THOUGHT OF THEMSELVES AS CELLS IN THE BODY OF THE WORLD, NOT AS INDIVIDUALS.

LOVE WAS CONSIDERED A CRIME. LOVE, OF COURSE, IS THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF INDIVIDUALITY...

...FOR, TO GIVE YOURSELF TO ANOTHER, YOU MUST BE AN INDIVIDUAL FIRST.

YOU ARE REMEMBERED AS THE GREATEST CRIMINAL OF ALL TIME. EVEN I THOUGHT SO...

...UNTIL I FELL IN LOVE.

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO CHANGE THE WORLD, TO REINSTATE INDIVIDUALITY AND ALLOW LOVE TO FLOURISH...

...BUT I AM FAILING. A POWERFUL, VORACIOUS SPIRIT POSSESSES THIS WORLD. THOUGH I AM EMPEROR, INEVITABLY ITS WILL SHALL PREVAIL, NOT MINE.

IT DOES NOT WANT YOU HERE. FLEE. NOW. I WARN YOU.

I WILL NOT FLEE. I WOULD LEARN MORE.

LORCA?

LEGEND FORETOLD THAT ONE DAY YOU WOULD COME AGAIN...

...TO DANCE A ***DANCE OF WAR*** THAT WILL DESTROY THE WORLD.

THIS WORLD... AND ALL WORLDS... ***AHT!***

LORCA HAS VANISHED... BUT NOW THE WORLD ***ITSELF*** RISES AGAINST ME!

ARRH!

LORCA! COME BACK!

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF ZAHNRHEE? TELL ME!

STILL THINK I'M THE GREATEST THREAT, MISTER DANCER?

YOU... HERE...?

WHY NOT? IT IS A DREAM...

...THOUGH SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT FOR YOU, IT'S NOT JUST A DREAM. RIGHT?

THIS PROBABLY DOESN'T *COUNT*, BECAUSE THIS IS *YOUR* DREAM...

...BUT I *OWE* YOU THIS.

I KNOW YOU *COULD* HAVE KILLED ME THE FIRST TIME WE FOUGHT.

MY THANKS, YOUNG WARRIOR.

DON'T MENTION IT. *EVER*, OKAY?

LOOK, I'M NOT READY TO ADMIT WE'RE LIKE *BROTHERS* YET, BUT WE DO HAVE *ONE* THING IN COMMON--

--SEARCHING FOR SOMEONE WE LOVE.

FOR ME IT WAS MY *BROTHER*. I LOOKED ALL OVER 'NAM FOR HIM.

FOR YOU, ITS WHATSERNAME.

IF YOU THINK SHE'S AROUND HERE, GO *FIND* HER.

I *SENSE* HER PRESENSE... *WITHIN*.

I AM *COMING*, ZAHNRHEE!

I AM NEAR THE VERY CENTER OF THIS... THING...

...AND NEAR MY ZAHNRHEE!

I CAN *FEEL* THE VIBRATIONS OF HER SPIRIT... BUT...

... WHY DOES SHE NOT *CALL* TO ME?

THIS WAY.

CLOSE... SHE IS VERY CLOSE...

ZAHNRHEE!

HELLO, MY LOVE.

THOUGH I HAVE SUFFERED BEYOND IMAGINING ALL THESE MILLENNIA...

...THIS IS THE SADDEST MOMENT OF MY EXISTENCE.

ZAHNRHEE, I LOVE YOU.

STAY AWAY, I AM NOT WHAT YOU THINK I AM.

I AM THIS *WORLD*, DEAR PRINCE. IT IS MY BODY.

I MADE THIS LIKENESS OF WHAT I ONCE WAS TO SPEAK FOR ME... AS I MADE THE **ZOMS** THAT TRIED TO DRIVE YOU AWAY...

...AS I MADE THE LIKENESS OF *LORCA* TO WARN YOU, AND THE TENTACLES TO SUBDUE YOU.

BUT... WHEN I ENTERED MY DREAM, YOU GREETED ME WITH LOVE.

THAT WAS YOUR DOING, MY PRINCE. IT *IS* YOUR DREAM.

I NEVER WANTED YOU TO COME HERE. I NEVER WANTED YOU TO SEE WHAT I HAVE BECOME.

ONCE, I WAS LOVE, LIFE AND THE GIVING OF LIFE.

THE UNION OF OUR SPIRITS IN THE DANCE UNLEASHED POWER TO SHAKE THE HEAVENS...

...AND WHEN THE SPELL WAS BROKEN... WHEN THE WORLD SPIRIT SWALLOWED ME...

...THIS WORLD WAS *IMBUED* WITH POWER. I BECAME THE *WORLD*...

...AND THE WORLD HAS BECOME A *NIGHTMARE*.

HTT! THE FEATHERED SERPENT...!

...AND THRAHKAHL, MY ANCIENT RIVAL!

YOU HAVE DONE THIS TO MY WOMAN, SNAKE!

I WILL RUN YOU THROUGH!

...AND YOU, THRAHKAHL, I KNOW YOU LOVED ZAHNRHEE, TOO! BUT IF YOU DARE TO OPPOSE ME...

WHAT? HE... FADES AWAY.

THEY WERE MERE FLICKERINGS OF THOUGHT... PHANTOM *SCAPEGOATS* THAT I CALLED FORTH. IT *IS*... MY DREAM.

THE FEATHERED SERPENT IS NOT SO EASILY DISPATCHED. HIS COILS WIND ALL THROUGH MY FLESH.

HEAR ME, MY PRINCE-- SINCE THE NIGHT THE SPELL WAS BROKEN, THIS WORLD HAS BEEN *UNFETTERED* FROM THE ID OF HUMANKIND...

...NO LONGER JUST A PLACE OF DREAMS, IT HAS A LIFE OF ITS *OWN*... LIFE I GAVE IT!

ONLY *YOU* COULD HAVE ENTERED HERE BY DREAMING.

RECENTLY, THOUGH, THE VEIL THAT SEPARATES THIS WORLD FROM THE WORLD OF HUMAN-KIND HAS BEEN *PIERCED*.

YES. I HAVE SEEN DREAMS ABROAD UPON THE EARTH... AND *SLAIN* ONE.

AND NOW THAT THERE ARE RIFTS IN THE VEIL BETWEEN THE REALMS, HERE AND THERE, A HUMAN'S DREAM HAS COME *TRUE*.

I TRIED TO *WARN* YOU. THROUGH A RIFT I REACHED INTO A HUMAN WOMAN'S DREAMS AND FILLED HER MIND WITH MY VOICE

I CAME TO THE WOMAN-- SAL-LEE-- AT ONCE WHEN I HEARD THE ECHOES OF YOUR VOICE. I SAW WHAT WAS HAPPENING...

...BUT IT MAY BE TOO LATE TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE.

MY LOVE...!

CAN... NOT... MAIN... TAIN... FORM...

I WILL FREE YOU FROM THIS HORROR, ZAHNRHEE!

THIS WORLD IS MY BODY, AND I AM ITS SOUL. THERE IS NO ESCAPE, SAVE DEATH.

LISTEN TO ME, MY LOVE. IF DREAMS WALK BEYOND THE VEIL, AND DREAMS ARE COMING TRUE...

...THEN LIFE STANDS UPON THE THRESHOLD OF ITS FINAL DESTINY.

HUMANKIND IS NOT READY TO BECOME AS GODS, SHAPING ALL REALITY WITH THEIR WHIMS.

I WILL WIPE THE SLATE CLEAN FIRST... AND RESTORE THE UNIVERSE TO THE UTTER PEACE OF EMPTINESS.

FATE HAS CAST US IN OUR ROLES... YOU ARE ONE WITH THE ENERGY THAT DANCES IN THE LIFELESS VOID...

...I AM ONE WITH THE SUBSTANCE OF LIFE AND LIFE ITSELF.

IN THE END, LIFE WILL SUBSUME ALL ENERGY, OR SUCCUMB TO OBLIVION.

THE *TIME*... HAS *COME*!

NO. I WILL RETURN TO THE PLACE OF HUMANKIND, *UNDO* THE DAMAGE... FIND A WAY TO *SEAL* THE RIFTS...

...THEN I WILL COME FOR YOU AND FIND A WAY TO FREE YOU.

HURRY, MY LOVE... *HURRY*!

YO, DANCER! IT'S TIME TO WAKE UP.

YES. THERE IS MUCH TO DO.

FORGET IT. THERE'S NOTHING TO DO.

BUT... ZAHNRHEE...

YOU NEVER SAW HER. THIS IS A DREAM. IT'S JUST A DREAM.

YOU WON'T EVEN *REMEMBER* IT WHEN YOU WAKE UP.

FORGET IT... *FORGET* IT... *FORGET* IT...

...FORGET IT...

...FORGET IT... FORGET IT...

YES... FORGET IT, DANCER.

LIFE STANDS ON THE THRESHOLD OF ITS FINAL DESTINY, ALL RIGHT...

...AND IT'S GOING TO BE A PRETTY TRICKY THING TO MANAGE AS IS.

CAN'T HAVE YOU INTERFERING.

THAT'S IT... RISE TO THE PLANES OF CONSCIOUSNESS SLOWLY...

MM... I CAN'T RESIST THIS. GOD, I *WANT* YOU...

...BUT THAT'LL WAIT TILL LATER.

GOOD NIGHT, SWEET PRINCE. OR IS IT GOOD MORNING?

I HAVE SLEPT.

HUH...? OH... WOW. GUESS I DID, TOO.

DIDJA HAVE SWEET DREAMS, MISTER DANCER?

LOOKS LIKE ALL OF US CAT-NAPPED.

WONDER WHAT MADE US DO THAT? I WASN'T TIRED.

BANG

BANG!

I... DO NOT REMEMBER... EXCEPT...

...THERE WAS A KISS.

SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD DREAM.

I DREAMED I WAS FLYING. I ALWAYS DO.

THEN... WHY DO YOU NOT FLY?

OTHERS HAVE HAD THEIR DREAMS COME TRUE...

...WHAT IS THE HARM IN THAT?

YOU TALK LIKE FLYING IS SOMETHING I COULD JUST DO IF I WANTED.

BANG!

HM. HERE ON THIS WORLD, YOU *HAVE* ALL THE TECHNOLOGY NECESSARY TO NULLIFY GRAVITY, BUT YOU HAVE NOT PUT THE PIECES OF THE PUZZLE TOGETHER YET.

SO... WHAT? SOMEBODY COULD *INVENT* ME A BUCK ROGERS ANTI-GRAVITY GADGET?

YES... BUT YOU NEED NOT WAIT.

I WILL SIMPLY CHANGE YOUR VIBRATIONAL FREQUENCY...

...TO GIVE YOU THE POWER OF PERSONAL GRAVITY DEFIANCE.

NO WAY!

WHOA.

BILLY...?

I CAN FLY!

BANG

BANG!

IT'S A DREAM COME TRUE!

NEXT:
"LEAD HIM NOT INTO TEMPTATION"

letters TO THE EDITOR

DEFIANT welcomes your comments.

Please address all mail to:
Letters to the Editor
DEFIANT
232 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016

JIM SHOOTER
Editor in Chief

WINSTON FOWLKES
Publisher

JANET JACKSON
Creative Director

ED POLGARDY
Senior Editor

JOE JAMES
Editor

RON ZALME
Production Director

PETER LUKIC
Design Director

DEBBIE FIX
General Manager

CLARK SMITH
Sales & Marketing Manager

MICHAEL HURLEY
Advertising Sales

DEFIANT®

Hey, DEFIANT Ones!

Whoa! Jim Shooter and Alan Weiss have done it again! It can't be easy to make a story heavy and light-hearted at the same time, but you guys did it with what looked like the greatest of ease. This story tied in the *War Dancer's* PLASM connection (as shown in the masterful *WARRIORS OF PLASM* #7) while still telling a fun, exciting story on its own with the Plasmoid wrestlers "going native" on Earth. As a fan of "rasslin'" (hey, it's soap-opera for guys!), I can tell you that putting *Ahrq* up against wrestlers, whether home-grown or PLASM-grown, is inspired! Hell, his costume alone would fit right into the WWF! *Billy Ballistic* looks like a promising character, too. I'm reserving a box seat *now* for "Armageddon at the Garden"!

I'm sure all the anti-violence crybabies were relieved to know that *"Willie"* and *"Happy"* from *WD* #1 really and truly were Plasmoid spies, and that *Ahrq* didn't just blast 'em for the hell of it. Are these people blind? Didn't they notice the clues all over #1—for example, how come that "kid" could pronounce names like "Quexzal Kwa," and since when do real kids and dogs dissolve into green slime immediately after death?! *Duh!* Like Sherlock Holmes might've said, "They see, but they do not observe!"

"Beautiful were the women of Quexzal-Kwa!" *Ahrq* ain't kidding! With babes like *Zahnree* on *Ahrq's* home planet, no wonder "Romance warmed the nights!" Speaking of terrific women, my wife and I both hope this isn't the last we and *Ahrq* will see of *Sally.* So what if she isn't from Nem? How can you not enjoy a character so frazzled that even her *hair* is clenched? A heroine who's neurotic while still being likable is hard to find! More *Sally,* and quick! (Jeez, I hope her homeowner's insurance was paid up before *Ahrq* took on the Plasmoids back in *WD* #1...)

Remember when I said I thought Charles Yoakum's inking style didn't mesh well with Greg Boone's penciling in *THE GOOD GUYS* #4? Well, no such problem with the team-up of Yoakum and Weiss on *WAR DANCER* #2! These guys go together like, as my dad would've said, ham and eggs (or maybe Green Eggs and Ham—just kidding); each one's style really brings the other's work to life! Their "action shots" really add *oomph!* to the climactic fight between *Ahrq* and *Massac,* too, with a very effective broody, moody quality added by Tim Perkins's coloring. (When *Ahrq* eventually dukes it out with *Charlemagne,* they can compare notes on limb-regeneration!) Here's hoping they'll all collaborate on *WAR DANCER's*

artwork for the next millennium or so! Keep up the great work!

DEFIANT to the max,
Mike Pendleton
Elmont, NY

P.S.: By the way, that was a nice, *subtle* anti-drug message you had there, too, with *Centurion Massac's* Psycho-Steroids. I'm not squeamish, but my wife says if all substance-abusers were shown sticking needles bloodily into their necks, like *Massac* does here, no kid would ever become a junkie.

Dear DEFIANT Crew,
WAR DANCER #1 was great. My fears that your stories would eventually follow the pattern of your competitors and enter a state of decrepitude have been irrevocably allayed. Just when I think no publisher (including yourself) can surpass the level that you at DEFIANT have set for comic books, along comes Alan Weiss's brilliant creation.

Though simply a cursory student of South American anthropology, I have always thought that the pre-Columbian civilizations—the Olmecs, Toltecs, and their famous descendants, the Aztecs, Mayans, and Incas, among others—remain an extremely rich yet untapped source for stories. These civilizations had both advanced and barbaric elements in their day-to-day activities and featured complex cultural systems, especially in art and religion. The potential for great stories is amazing, as *WAR DANCER* #1 has shown. *Ahrq Tsolmec* is cognizant of science, as demonstrated by his mention of entropy, viscosity, matter, inertia, and gravity, and exhibits some of the more cultural (and barbaric) traits found in these ancient societies, such as his ruthlessness (and honor) in dealing with opponents and his absolute self-recognition of his and others' place in the stratified caste system of his realm. I hope these elements are further explored in future issues. Also, I strongly recommend that you not alter *Ahrq's* characteristics to harmonize with others in your universe, such as *Mrs. J.* and *Charlemagne.* I can't wait for the meeting between *Ahrq* and *Charles Smith!*

In addition, an analysis of these civilizations provides "realistic" comic-book expositions, because many questions about these civilizations remain unanswered. For example, most of the great Mayan centers collapsed about 900 A.D. for unclear reasons. Was *Ahrq* involved? Heck, only the limits are imaginary.

Defiantly,
Alvaro E. Pereira
Somerset, MA

Dear Jim Shooter and company,
Where *WAR DANCER* #1 completely focused on the events concerning mostly normal human beings, issue #2 suddenly changed pace, being mainly centered around *Ahrq Tsolmec* and his origin, and also around the renegade group of citizens from the *Org* of PLASM who're currently residing on Earth. With this issue, you ensure yourselves of a diverse flow of the story, thus making the whole book a lot more attractive to the readers out there.

I'm somewhat surprised, this being the age where almost any new character's origin seems to be shrouded in deep black mystery, to see so much of *Ahrq's* past told in what is only the second issue of the series. Although both ways (mystery origin or not) have their pros and cons, I must admit it did help establish the character of our *War Dancer* more than it would have, had his origin been a closed book for us readers. Good job!

The ferocious fight between *Ahrq* and *Centurion Massac* (or, as wrestling fans call him, *Massaker* or *Mass)* was sweet, short, and savage, while showing us just how formidable the *War Dancer's* powers really are. I, for one, was struck with surprise when I saw him regenerate his ripped-off arm so quick-

ly! I must only warn you guys not to make him into some kind of near-immortal powerhouse, for that'll most likely ruin his now-great character.

Now, with *WAR DANCER* #3, you've managed to create a certain, presumably typical atmosphere for this series, gradually paving the pathway to be trod by what is probably the greatest warrior ever to walk the planet Earth, the Org, or for that matter, any other planet. Ahrq has already proven himself quite worthy of the title *War Dancer,* but I must admit that in *"Tag Team Terror,"* he also proves to be a most resourceful fighter in combat with an enemy who's even more formidable as far as muscle quantity is concerned! The idea of having *Spear* and *Mass* work as two professional wrestlers to cover their true nature was very innovative.

However, I must admit that I wasn't as impressed with the ending of the "rematch" between *Mass* and *War Dancer*. *Mass* wanted more and more power, longing for another "shot" which would surely make him invincible, but he forgot his body still has limits. Maybe it's just my personal tastes, but it seemed a bit anti-climactic to me. When I come across a fight scene in which the antagonist ends up like this, losing because of his own obsession with power, I usually have to turn my head in disgust. While it was somewhat different this time, because the atmosphere makes this series so unique, I still had a nagging feeling afterwards. I simply felt that *Mass* was defeated too easily. Here's hoping *Ahrq* will face more worthy opponents next time around.

Nevertheless, after three issues of this book, I think it's safe to say you have another great series on your hands with *WAR DANCER*. It's been a pleasure to have read these early installments, and I'll be back next month for more!

Defiantly,
Olav Beemer
Zeist, The
Netherlands

Dear Jim Shooter
and Alan Weiss,
I recently had the pleasure of reading the first issue of *WAR DANCER,* which made me think of the African and Brazilian forms of dance/ritual called *capoeira*. The movements throughout the dance, which take place in a rink or circle or setting called *hoda,* are filled with energy, tension, rage, passion, controlled emotion. They are breathtaking to watch as two or more warriors move back and forth, striking at each other and yet somehow averting danger.

The pace is quick and the movements appear dangerously playful. It is a dance of war—and more. The movements and the dance itself is said to be passed on or remembered by the "body" itself. It is as if the body feels the memories and those memories are transformed into actions.

Thank you for transforming comics to a higher level of artistry, entertainment, and—dare I say it?—literature. Keep challenging yourself and us. Most of all, keep dancing the war dance.

Respectfully yours,
Michael J. Gannon
Brooklyn, NY

Dear Editors,
WAR DANCER #1 was top quality—very interesting and moody. The script, art, and the painted colors are very well done. Most colors of comics out there look virtually the same with high-tech armor and such, but your painted colors look more realistic than others.

I liked Deborah Purcell's editorial in *WAR DANCER* #1, too. Maybe the theme "Beyond the Imaginary Limits" means a step closer to reality. Also, I have some suggestions if a title for the letters page hasn't been done yet. How about "Dance Notes," "War Memo," "War Letters," or "Dance Steps"?

If this letter gets print-

ed, thanks; if not, then all I've got to say is that you deserve the praise!!! And I will always write to DEFIANT!

Blas Tiangco
Batangas City,
Philippines

Dear DEFIANT,
I am very pleased with the direction of *WAR DANCER*. Issues #2 and #3 introduced an interesting and exciting background to the story: Professional wrestling. I am a major fan of television wrestling who greatly appreciates its entertainment value. It is practically all that I watch, aside from *The Simpsons* (I love social satire!). No other programs can compete with wrestling's enjoyable mixture of humor, drama, intrigue, and theatrics. In some ways, pro-wrestling is superhero comics come to life, complete with its struggle between those who assume heroic characters and those who assume villainous characters. (*Billy Ballistic* reminds me of a cross between two former world wrestling champions: Bob Backlund and The Ultimate Warrior.) Thus, I doubly enjoyed these most recent issues of *WAR DANCER*, with their combination of super-heroism and pro-wrestling. It's unfortunate that pro-wrestling is rarely, if ever, used as a theme or setting in comic books. Hopefully, *WAR DANCER* will change this.

Some time ago, I pondered the possibility of pro-wrestling champions wearing "championship helmets" instead of championship belts. The scenes where *Massaker* wore *Ahrq's* golden helmet—*Massaker's* trophy for his perceived victory over *Ahrq*—happily confirmed my thoughts.

I am quite familiar with the CWA of the real world. The "Catch Wrestling Association," as opposed to your *"Cosmic Wrestling Association,"* was an independent professional wrestling organization throughout the 1980s, exhibiting pro-wrestling events at relatively small showcases across the southwestern U.S. It advocated a more realistic, rougher, catch-as-catch-can wrestling style. However, under intense pressure from big competitors like the National Wrestling Alliance (NWA, currently World Championship Wrestling or WCW) and the World Wrestling Federation (WWF), it has since become defunct.

Nevertheless, the real CWA has spawned the pro-wrestling careers of several popular individuals like the following: Former thirteen-time United States Wrestling Association (USWA) and American Wrestling Association (AWA) world champion Jerry "The King" Lawler; former three-time WCW world champion Big Van Vader; WCW villain and world title contender Sid Vicious; former NWA world champion Masa-Hiro Chono; and former Smoky Mountain Wrestling (SMW) tag team champions Ron and Don Harris—The Bruise Brothers. Jerry Lawler, Van Vader, and Sid Vicious are all former CWA world champions who have achieved greater success elsewhere. I just thought that I would let you know.

Before I close, I would like to suggest that you select names for the letter columns of each of your individual titles. Where *WAR DANCER* is concerned, how do "Place of Dreams," "Dream Warriors," "Warwords," "Warriords," "The Last Dance," "The Last Waltz," "Dancing Participles," "Final Judgment," "The End," "Conclusions," or "The Conclusion" sound?

Thank you for your time and consideration. Keep up the good work and keep fighting the good fight.

Defiantly,
Steven Beg
Weston, Ontario
CANADA

Thanks, but we prefer Letters to the Editor.